

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method, comprising the steps of:
  - responding to a received call origination dialed from a cellular mobile station having a post-paid subscription to a toll free telephone number recognized in a supporting cellular communications network as being associated with a prepaid subscription by triggering supporting cellular network calculation of a permitted prepaid use time for user communications effectuated through that mobile station;
  - through connecting the cellular mobile station to a user called destination to establish a call connection; and
  - monitoring a duration of the established call connection against the calculated permitted use time.

2. The method as in claim 1 further including the steps of:

detecting that the monitored duration has as least met the calculated permitted prepaid use time;

5 terminating the established call connection; and

charging a fee for the utilized permitted prepaid use time against a prepaid account instead of against the mobile station post-paid subscription.

3. The method as in claim 2 further including the steps of:

determining prior to the step of through connecting a method of payment for the call; and

5 applying the fee against the determined method of payment.

~~4~~. The method as in claim 1 further including the steps of:

detecting a user termination of the established call connection prior to the expiration of the permitted prepaid  
5 use time;

calculating an elapsed use time; and

charging a fee for the calculated elapsed use time against a prepaid account instead of against the mobile station post-paid subscription.

5. The method as in claim 4 further including the steps of:

determining prior to the step of through connecting a method of payment for the call; and

5 applying the fee against the determined method of payment.

~~6.~~ A method, comprising the steps of:

receiving a call origination from a mobile station  
having a post-paid subscription, the call origination  
dialed to a first telephone number associated with a  
5 prepaid subscription;

triggering at a serving mobile switching center  
responsive to the received call origination and the dialed  
first telephone number the execution of an incoming message  
coordination feature;

10 collecting within the execution of the incoming  
message coordination feature a second telephone number  
identifying a called party and information concerning a  
prepaid method of payment for the call;

determining within a payment system of the supporting  
15 cellular network the calculation of a permitted use time  
for user communications effectuated through the mobile  
station and with the called party;

sending of a location request message including the  
first telephone number from the serving mobile switching  
20 center to a home location register that stores the prepaid  
subscription;

recognizing at the home location register that the  
location request message concerns a prepaid subscription  
and querying the payment system to retrieve the second  
25 telephone number and the permitted use time;

communicating the second telephone number and the  
permitted use time from the home location register to the  
serving mobile switching center;

through connecting the mobile station to the called  
30 party to establish a call connection; and

monitoring a duration of the established call  
connection against the calculated permitted use time.

7. The method as in claim 6 further including the  
steps of:

detecting that the monitored duration has as least met  
the calculated permitted use time;

5 terminating the established call connection; and  
charging a fee for the utilized permitted use time.

8. The method as in claim 7 further including the step of applying the fee against the identified prepaid method of payment instead of against the post-paid subscription for the mobile station.

9. The method as in claim 6 further including the steps of:

detecting a user termination of the established call connection prior to the expiration of the permitted use  
5 time;

calculating an elapsed use time; and

charging a fee for the calculated elapsed use time.

10. The method as in claim 9 further including the step of applying the fee against the identified prepaid method of payment instead of against the post-paid subscription for the mobile station.

11. The method as in claim 6 wherein the first telephone number comprises a toll free number.

~~12.~~ A wireless cellular system, comprising:

a mobile switching center receiving a call origination from a mobile station having a post-paid subscription, wherein the call origination is dialed to a first telephone number associated with a prepaid subscription, and triggering the execution of an incoming message coordination feature;

an interactive voice response system connected to the mobile switching center and activated by the incoming message coordination feature to collect from the mobile station a second telephone number identifying a called party and information concerning a prepaid method of payment for the call;

a payment system connected to the interactive voice response system and operable to calculate a permitted use time for user communications effectuated through the mobile station and with the called party; and

a home location register connected to the mobile switching center and the payment system and operating to store the prepaid subscription associated with the first telephone number;

wherein the mobile switching center pre-routes a call to the first telephone number to the home location register;

25        wherein the home location register recognizes that the pre-routing concerns the first telephone number prepaid subscription and queries the payment system to retrieve the second telephone number and the permitted use time for delivery to the mobile switching center; and

30        wherein the mobile switching center through connects the mobile station to the called party to establish a call connection, and monitors a duration of the established call connection against the calculated permitted use time.

13. The system as in claim 12 wherein the mobile switching center further detects that the monitored duration has as least met the calculated permitted use time and terminates the established call connection.

14. The system as in claim 13 wherein the payment system charges a fee for the utilized permitted use time against the identified prepaid method of payment instead of against the mobile station post-paid subscription.



15. The system as in claim 12 wherein the mobile switching center further detects a user termination of the established call connection prior to the expiration of the permitted use time and calculates an elapsed use time.

16. The system as in claim 15 wherein the payment system charges a fee for the calculated elapsed use time against the identified prepaid method of payment instead of against the mobile station post-paid subscription.

17. The system as in claim 12 wherein the first telephone number comprises a toll free telephone number.

18. A prepaid service system, comprising:

a mobile station having a post-paid subscription and operable to transceive user communications over a wireless cellular air interface; and

5 a supporting cellular communications network operating to calculate a permitted duration for prepaid user communications effectuated through the mobile station and monitor a call connection to ensure the call does not exceed the calculated permitted duration; and

10 a switching node connected to the base transceiver station and the means for calculating a permitted duration;

wherein the switching node operates to trigger, responsive to mobile station dialing of a certain prepaid subscription telephone number other than a destination  
15 telephone number for a prepaid call, an operation within the supporting cellular communications network to calculate the permitted use time for user communications effectuated through that mobile station.

19. The system as in claim 18 wherein the supporting cellular communications network further comprises:

a base transceiver station for communicating with the mobile station over the wireless cellular air interface.

20. The system as in claim 18 further including means within the supporting cellular communications network for collecting prepaid call payment information from the mobile station user.

21. The system as in claim 20 wherein the means for collecting comprises an interactive voice response system activated responsive to the mobile station call to the prepaid subscription telephone number and operating to  
5 query the user for the call payment information.

22. The system as in claim 20 wherein the means for calculating determines the permitted use time based on the collected call payment information.

23. The system as in claim 20 wherein charges for the call are applied against an account identified by the prepaid call payment information instead of against the mobile station post-paid subscription.

24. The system as in claim 18 wherein the prepaid subscription telephone number comprises a toll free number.

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